

FIRST WHITE MEN ON IOWA SOIL.

The second volume of "Bancroft's History of America" relates that on the 10th of June 1673, Marquette, Joliet, five other Frenchmen, and two Indian guides crossed from the Fox river to the Wisconsin, carrying their two canoes. From the Wisconsin the two Indians returned to their tribe and the seven Frenchmen went forward. In seven days they reached the Mississippi, and the two birch-bark canoes, raising their happy sails under new skies and to unknown breezes, floated down the calm magnificence of the ocean stream, over broad clear sand-bars, the resort of innumerable water-fowl, winding through islets that swelled with tufts of massive thickets from the bosom of the channel, and between the natural parks and prairies of Illinois and Iowa. About sixty leagues below the mouth of the Wisconsin the western bank of the Mississippi bore on its sands the trail of men; a little footpath was discerned, leading into a beautiful prairie, and, leaving the canoes, Joliet and Marquette resolved alone to brave a meeting with the savages. After walking six miles they beheld a village on the banks of a river, and two others on a slope at a distance of a mile and a half from the first. The river was the *Mou-in-gou-e-na* or *Moingona*, of which we have corrupted the name into *Des Moines*. Marquette and Joliet were the first white men who trod the soil of Iowa.

RATHER A FORMIDABLE WEAPON.

Elihu B. Washburne, in a sketch of Edward Coles, the second governor of Illinois, gives a bit of Iowa experience that sounds rather singular at this day. Mr. Washburne was fresh from staid and sober New England, and in the spring of 1840 was in attendance at a term of court held at the town of Maquoketa. That community, like many frontier settlements, was afflicted with a gang of outlaws and counterfeiters, which the newly organized courts found it difficult to deal with effectually, and so they had just risen en masse and driven out a gang of counterfeiters in a fierce fight in which seven men were killed. There was great excitement and every man was armed. Mr. Washburne says: "I stopped at the tavern which had been kept by W. W. Brown, who was the leader of the gang, and who had been killed. My room-mate was Judge James Grant, of Davenport, who has been for nearly half a century one of the most distinguished citizens and lawyers of Iowa. When we were about to retire what was my amazement to see my room-mate, whom I had never met before, draw out from the back of his coat an immense bowie-knife and place it under his pillow. When abroad I wrote a letter to a friend in regard to this incident, and described Judge Grant's bowie-knife as being three feet long. This letter got into the newspapers. The Judge wrote me a letter to Paris, denying my statement and asserting that the bowie-knife he had on that occasion was only two feet long."

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